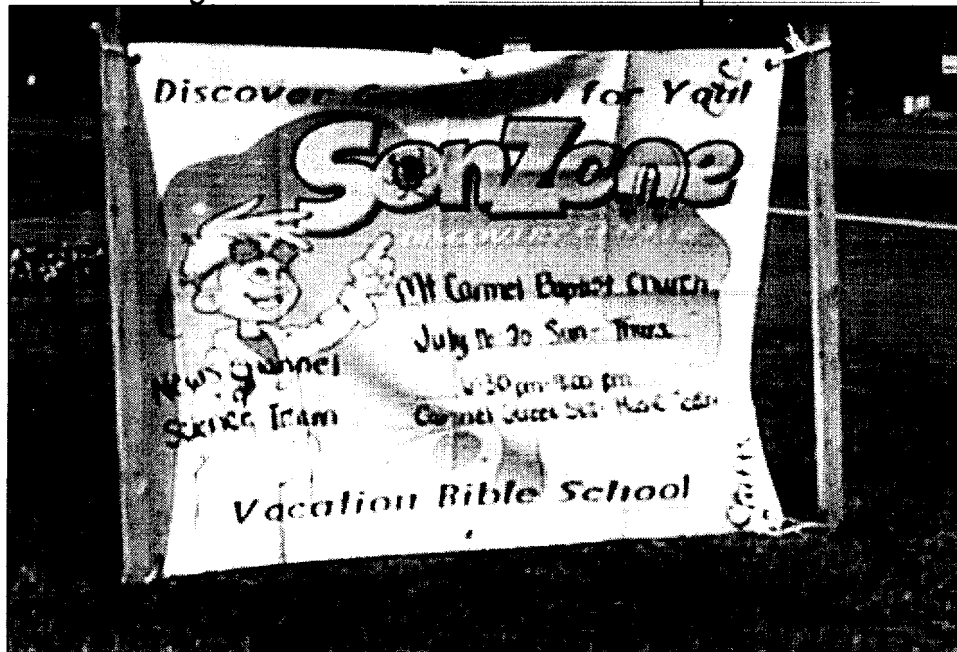


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5 005.jpg of 21

Many Signal Mountain and Walden Churches have great  
Vacation Bible Schools in the Summer months.  
This sign is for a VBS at Mount Carmel Baptist Church.



005.jpg

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[6 006.jpg of 21

Church's Antiques, 1819 Taft Highway, 886-9636



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7 007.jpg of 21

Walden Commons, Walden's Newest Office Mall



007.jpg

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8 008.jpg of 21

Walden's Ridge Emergency Service  
Fire-fighting and Ambulance, 2100 Taft Highway, 886-5974

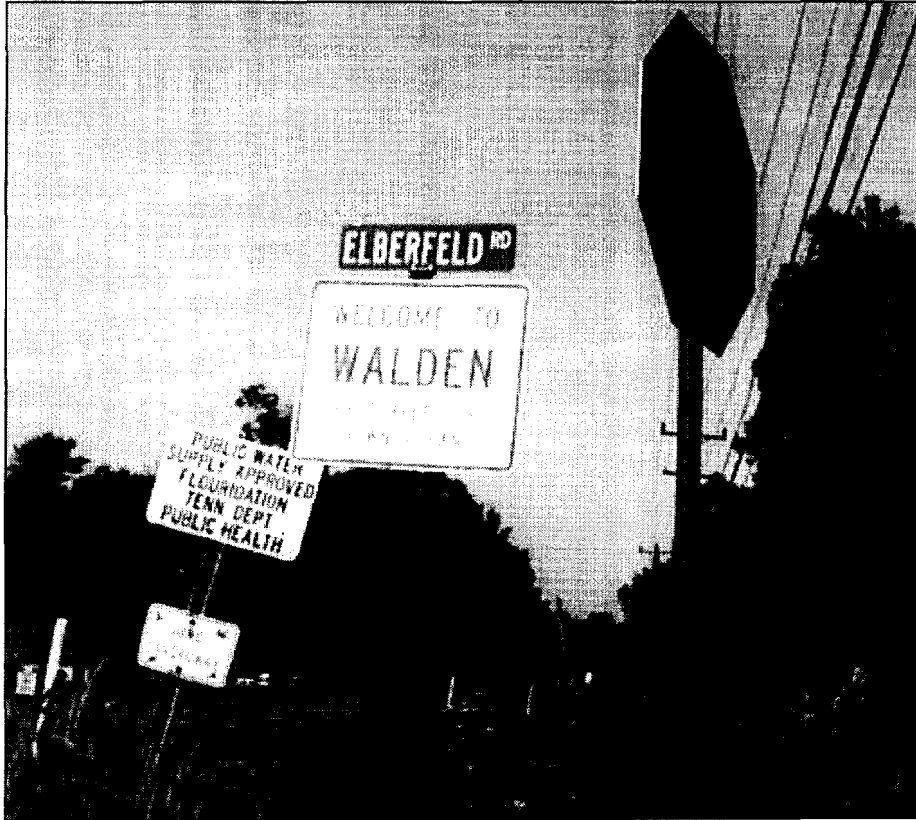


008.jpg

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9 009.jpg of 21

Walden begins here, just North of Signal Plaza.  
As you can see from the signs, we have great water and  
lots of birds. A nice place to live!



009.jpg

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10 010.jpg of 21

Cutting Corners (886-1869), and the Flowering Pot  
1904 Taft Highway, 886-9246



010.jpg

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11 011.jpg of 21

This is a little byway that runs parallel to Taft Highway,  
and stretches from the Walden Town Hall to Lynn's Market (looking North).



011.jpg

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12 012.jpg of 21

Looking North along Taft Highway, we see the Walden's Ridge Emergency Service, The Golden Palace Restaurant (2102 Taft Highway, 886-5588, really good Chinese food), and Lynn's Market (2106 Taft Highway, 886-9809)



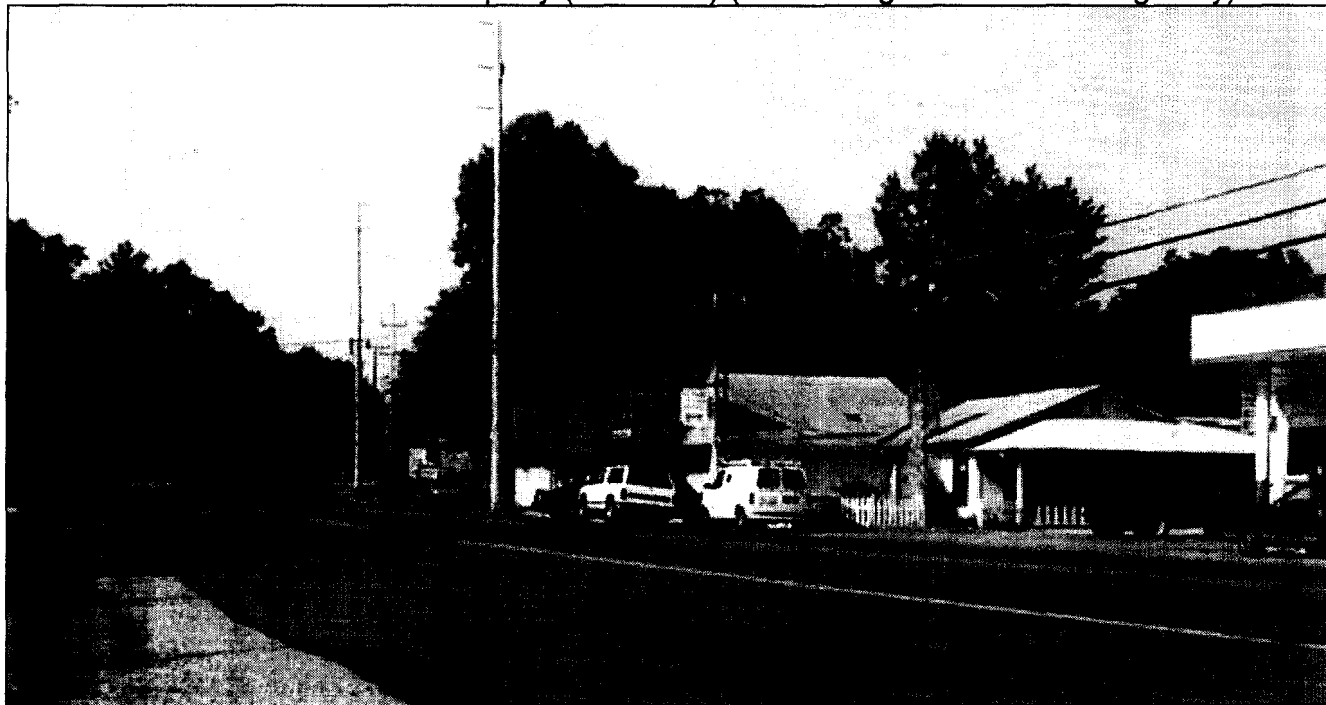
012.jpg



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13 013.jpg of 21

Mountain View Service Company (886-5019) (still looking North on Taft Highway).



013.jpg

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Game Time Sports (turn right), and  
Sourdough Cafe, 1832 Taft Highway, 886-7744



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15 015.jpg of 21

Pumpkin Patch Playground, right  
behind the Walden Town Hall, 1836 Taft Highway



015.jpg

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The Pumpkin Patch Pavilion, a nice place for a picnic!

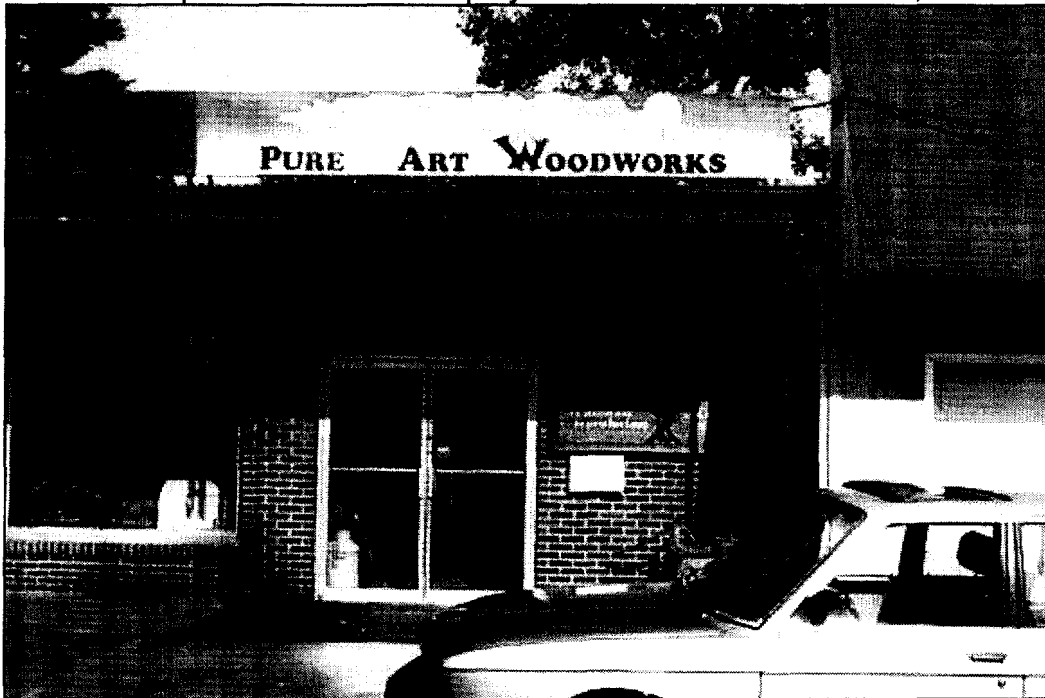


016.jpg

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17 017.jpg of 21

Pure Art Woodworks, 1828 Taft Highway, 886-6625  
Comtek Computer Personnel Employment Services is in the rear, 886-7908



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Sourdough Cafe, 1832 Taft Highway, 886-7744



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Front View of Sourdough Cafe, 886-7744



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Walden Town Hall, 1836 Taft Highway, 886-4362



020.jpg



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21 021.jpg of 21

Walden's Police keep their cars here, at the Town Hall;  
and the Pumpkin Patch Playground is behind the building.



021.jpg

# signalmountain.net

A directory for Signal Mountain, and Walden, Tennessee

## Walden's Ridge

by Dr. Marshall C. St. John (updated December 1999)



This is a short compilation of historical tidbits and also more up-to-date information about the area. For more detailed information, please see *Pioneers of Walden's Ridge*, by Elsie Conner Adams, *Picture Stories of Signal Mountain*, by Mildred Rothermel and *Along the Ridge*, by James L. Douthat. These books, and others about Signal Mountain and Walden's Ridge, may be purchased from "Wild Hare Books."

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Signal Mountain and Walden's Ridge lie at the end of the Cumberland Plateau, on a high bluff overlooking the "Scenic City" of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Signal Mountain is therefore not really a mountain at all, but rather land at a "normal" elevation that overlooks Chattanooga, which lies in a deep valley. However, it *feels* like a small mountain (especially after driving up the "W" road!) The climate here is temperate: rarely reaching 100 in the summer, and rarely falling below zero in the winter. We have snow in Walden's Ridge, where I live, but it is usually not too heavy. In the year 1893, early in the month of January, Walden's Ridge had the heaviest snow fall it had ever experienced. Three feet of snow entirely covered the wide plateau that stretches across the mountain top, and the people of Walden's Ridge were snowbound for weeks. The temperature had fallen below zero, and the little sunshine there was did not melt the snow for three weeks.

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According to "Goodspeeds's History of Tennessee," published in Nashville in 1887, Walden's Ridge was named after a certain John Walling, who came with a posse of men in the early 1800's to rescue two white women who had been carried off by Indians. They overtook the Indians on what is now Walden's Ridge, and recaptured the women. After staying there in a makeshift fort for several days, they returned home to Virginia. The Indians followed Walling home, and killed him while he was

plowing in his fields. The corruption of the name "Walling" into "Walden" was accomplished by a Mr. B.B. Cannon, county surveyor from 1830 to 1837, who preferred the "Walden" spelling of the family name. Cartter Patten, author of Signal Mountain and Walden's Ridge (1962), believed this theory to be correct.

Another theory is that Walden's Ridge was named in the early nineteenth century after a Mr. Elisha Walden (or Wallen or Walling), who was leading a band of hunters (possibly from Virginia), and who passed through this area in the early 1760's. Elisha Walden himself had been born in 1732 in Prince George County, Maryland. Not many people lived on Signal Mountain then, not even many Indians, although some of the Cherokee lived in the Chattanooga area below the mountain, and the roads later built as Anderson Pike and the Old Government Road were originally Indian trails. At one time an abundance of iron was discovered here, and led to the creation of an iron working industry in Rockwood, TN.

There is a twisting road from the Red Bank area of Chattanooga, up the side of the mountain, to the Walden's Ridge area, called the "W" road, because it twists in hairpin turns, like the corners of the letter "W." When this road was hardly a road in the early nineteenth century, it was made of logs, laid horizontally, the cracks between the logs filled in with dirt, and it was called the "corduroy road." In 1852 Col. Joe Anderson built the Anderson Pike across Walden's Ridge, to connect with the old Corduroy Road.

There were only about twelve families living on Walden's Ridge at the outbreak of the Civil War. Col. Joe Anderson owned about one thousand acres near the "Fur Top." He also owned a fine farm in Sequatchie Valley, where he lived, yet he probably did more to develop Walden's Ridge than any other man, having built the Anderson Pike. James C. Conner built and lived in his home in the cross roads and operated the toll gate with the help of his sons. He also served three terms as sheriff of Hamilton County, TN. A family by the name of Gadd lived at Sawyers. Uncle Billy Miles and a Winchester family lived near the Sequatchie County line. Other families were the Vandergriffs, the Kells, the Browns, the Johnsons, Dr. Carey (brother of the famous William Carey, the missionary), the Ranks, the Carlins, the Edmunds, the Bells, the Becks, and the Wilson Conners, the Smith, Uncle Bill Rodgers and family, Daniel Houser and family. Bob White lived on the Old Government Road about half way to the James C. Conner place.

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The very first school on Walden's Ridge, in fact the first school in all of Hamilton County, was the old Fairmount Academy, built in 1858. The small wooden building was located near the end of Fairmount Pike, on Academy Street, which is now simply a private drive. The Fairmount Academy building was paid for by Josh Beck, Will Fryar, A. M. Rogers. M. M. Rogers, J. M. Dobbs, and J. C. Conner. George Rogers did the actual construction work as his share of the building expenses.

In 1911 the old Fairmount Academy merged with the Oakwood School, and a new building was constructed at the intersection of Fairmount Road and Anderson Pike. This building served the educational needs of the community until 1937. The building

cost \$6,652. There was an enrollment of 111 pupils, and about 60 attended every day. In 1937 this building was replaced by Bachman Elementary School, which cost \$56,806, and was named in honor of US Senator Nathan L. Bachman, who lived then in Walden. In 1999 Bachman School was replaced by the new Nolan Elementary School on Shackleford Ridge Road, Hamilton County.

The Fairmount post office was established about 1870, with James P. Sham as first postmaster. Dr. McGuffey of "McGuffey Reader" fame was later postmaster. The old Fairmount Methodist Church, which began meeting in the Robinette's log cabin in 1857, was the first church Walden's Ridge.

Walden's Ridge in the earlier days was teeming with wild life, and still is to a large extent. Besides a multitude of dogs and cats, there are possum, racoon, rabbit, squirrels, deer, coyotes and the rare black bear. Sometimes eagles may be seen riding the air waves on the brow of the mountain, high above Chattanooga and the Tennessee River.

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The Walden's Ridge Civic League building was built in the 1920's as the auditorium of the combined Fairmount Academy and Oakwood School. This new building was the meeting place for the Sunday School and Community Church (organized at the instigation of Mrs. Della Camp by the Rev. Moses K. Hollister and his wife) that later became Wayside Presbyterian Church. The rustic mountain-stone chapel is a Walden landmark.

The land on which Wayside's building sits was a gift from Mrs. Z. C. Patten, in 1937. The interior of the church building is made of the same mountain-stone, and knotty pine. Wayside recently finished the installation of a pipe organ, which has increased both the beauty of our sanctuary, and our music. Wayside sits directly across the street from the WRCL building, home of "The Mountain Opry." Every Friday night people gather at the WRCL building to perform old-time mountain bluegrass music. Fiddlers and pickers come from all around, and admission is free.

Walden's Ridge and Signal Mountain are "bedroom communities" for Chattanooga. The schools are excellent, the crime rate is very low, and there is a genuine spirit of community here. Chattanooga is about a 20 minute drive down the mountain. The mountain is heavily forested. The multi-colored leaves are beautiful in the Fall, and in the Spring the many flowering dogwood trees and azaleas are a sight to behold.

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If you are coming this way, and looking for a night's lodging here, you might try calling Signal Crest Suites (423-886-9299), or Wanda Albritton at Fiddler's Green (423-886-1871). Fiddler's Green is a rustic mountain bed and breakfast establishment located in Walden.

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If you want to write and say "hello," or if you have a question about Walden or Signal Mountain, here's my email address: [drcsoa@vol.com](mailto:drcsoa@vol.com). I will respond as soon as

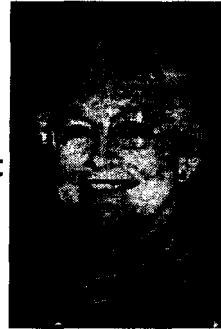
**possible.**

This page was updated on 9/30/99.

**HOME**

## Town of Walden: Past, Present, Future

**Mayor Elizabeth Akins gave the following article to the Signal Mountain Post, and it is republished here with her permission.**



In 1975-76, the "great experiment" began. The main question on everyone's mind at that time was "would the town of Walden survive?" Walden was originally incorporated due to a "will of the people who lived in the area of the original town boundaries". It was decided that Walden would be governed by a Mayor and Aldermen Charter. In November of 1975, Fred Hetzler was elected as Mayor of Walden, and the two Aldermen (persons) were Billie B. Ansel and Sam Chester.

The first budget was for a period of seven months, and it totaled \$9,650. Obviously, there was no money in the town's coffers, and the first officials applied for state shared funds, as well as most appreciatively received donations.

All sixteen plus miles of roads in the original town of Walden perimeters were of the tar and chip variety, with the exception of one-quarter mile of Ivory Street, which was paved with hot mix asphalt. A big issue at the time was whether the town would continue in the future with tar and chip roads at \$7,000 per mile, or hot mix at \$12,000 per mile.

There was no Town Hall. Meetings were held at Wayside Presbyterian Church. A Recorder was employed by the town, as were two policemen. The town purchased one used police vehicle, a Plymouth Volare, for \$1,234.65. In spite of the extremely small beginning, the town was growing, and a budget amount of \$75,025 was set for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1976 through June 30, 1977. Walden taxes were \$0.60 per \$100 of assessed value of property. A zoning plan was also adopted during that period of time.

From November of 1977 to November of 1979, the Mayor of Walden was Ms. Billie B. Ansel, and the two Alder persons were Rita J. Elliott and James C. Stites. Walden became the first municipality in Tennessee to have a majority of women elected as their town officials. During that time, property taxes were reduced by \$0.20 per \$100 of assessed value. Also, a town court was established and Jerry Foster was the first employed town judge.

In December of 1978, town meetings and police headquarters were in the leased "Old Highway Patrol" building behind the Walden Ridge Civic League building. Also in 1978, the official Walden seal was adopted. The design, which still includes an artistic rendition of the "W" Road, was submitted by Martha Willians. Also in 1978, the first road paving schedule was adopted.

The KKK was responsible in 1979 for creating uncalled for excitement in Walden. They burned a cross at the Walden Ridge Civic League property. Dan Crates was the Mayor, and a law was passed prohibiting fund raising or soliciting from motorists on Walden streets and highways.

During a gasoline shortage in 1980-82, Walden police vehicles were converted from gasoline to propane for fuel, causing a very high level of discomfort and a feeling of being very unsafe to the Walden policemen. The quick conversion back to gasoline was a welcome response from those police officers who were rightfully concerned about an explosion of their vehicle if someone decided to take a shot at them! Also during this time, Walden purchased a surplus dump truck and salt spreader from the State of Tennessee, and for awhile used part time help as drivers during severe weather conditions. Walden now contracts for the snow and ice removal from their roads.

In 1981, Walden increased the minimum lot size to one-half acre for construction of homes built in the future.

Walden resident Dr. Richard Krause, in 1988, headed up a project to install middle of the road reflectors on Forest Park, East Brow, Chestnut and Ivory to assist drivers during extreme fog conditions that are so prevalent on the mountain during the winter months. The original reflectors were funded and installed by neighbors and friends. To this day, the tradition of road reflectors continues over the major roads of Walden; however, taxes pay for the cost of the reflectors, but volunteers still install them.

In 1990, the minimum lot size for building a home was increased from one-half acre to one acre. In 1992, the minimum lot size was increased to two acres. Walden contends that these minimum limits assist the community in controlling the growth of building within their town limits, and aids in the preservation of the desirable rural setting of the town.

In September, 1993, the present Walden Town Hall located at 1836 Taft Highway was dedicated. In April of 1996, the Pumpkin Patch playground was completed. Walden resident Jane Jones, M.D. was the leader / chairman for the project. A combination of grants, contributions and community involvement made the Pumpkin Patch Playground possible.

Some of the "best kept secrets" of Walden are the Mountain Opry and Little Brown Church. The Mountain Opry has been a tradition of presenting performers from the mountain and the surrounding area every Friday night for years. Audiences are drawn from local people as well as people from out-of-state, some who have attended the Mountain Opry performances for years.

The Little Brown Church (nondenominational) holds services every Sunday morning from Memorial Day to Labor Day. On any Sunday morning in the summer, you can see hikers, bikers, horseback riders, etc. attending services at this popular church. Enthusiastic children ring the church bell at the end of each service, and usually neighborhood picnics follow the services. All types of weddings have been held at the Little Brown Church, from the formal to the most informal (even some barefoot weddings.)

In discussing the future of Walden into the third millennium, Mayor Elizabeth Akins said "My

hopes are for Walden to continue as a relaxed community of dedicated volunteers and community leaders. I hope the tradition of as little government regulation as possible continues.

"We look forward to the completion and reality of the Mountain Recreation Facility to be enjoyed by all residents of the mountain. We're cheering and supporting Sam Powell and the Mountain Recreation Committee to complete the planned hiking trails, soccer and baseball fields and tennis courts, picnic areas, etc. We applaud the addition of the Nolan Elementary School, and hope for the reality of a Hamilton County High School on our plateau.

"We're looking forward to a Walden Town Center which has been designed by Walden citizens. We also are working on a thirty-nine acre park, arboretum, and / or a recreation area to become a reality in the town of Walden. We're also hopeful to develop more walking trails and sidewalks where feasible.

"It has been a real experience to observe the formation of a new governmental body and have it successfully operate to the benefit of its citizens. As an elected official of the town of Walden, I look forward to continue serving its citizens. The town of Walden belongs to the people."

**HOME**



A directory for Signal Mountain, and Walden, Tennessee



## Walden's Ridge Guild

**Name:** Walden's Ridge Women's Guild

**Address:** 4013 Fairmont Pike, Signal Mountain, TN 37377

**Contact:** President, Mrs. Roddy Huff (Anne), (423) 886-5557

**Hours:** Third Thursday from September to May at 10:00 a.m.

**Updated:** May 1999

**Description:** Technically a non-profit, service organization for ladies who live on Walden's Ridge. We occasionally have fund raisers to raise money for different community projects on top of the mountain like Walden's Ridge Emergency Service, Pumpkin Patch Playground, books for the Signal Mountain Library to honor deceased members. We also plant and maintain several flower beds within the town of Walden and most members serve as volunteers with many other community organizations.

**Service Area:** On top of the mountain (Walden's Ridge) in Hamilton County including the towns of Walden and Signal Mountain.

**Eligibility:** There are no dues and membership is open to any lady who lives on the mountain.

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[HOME](#)